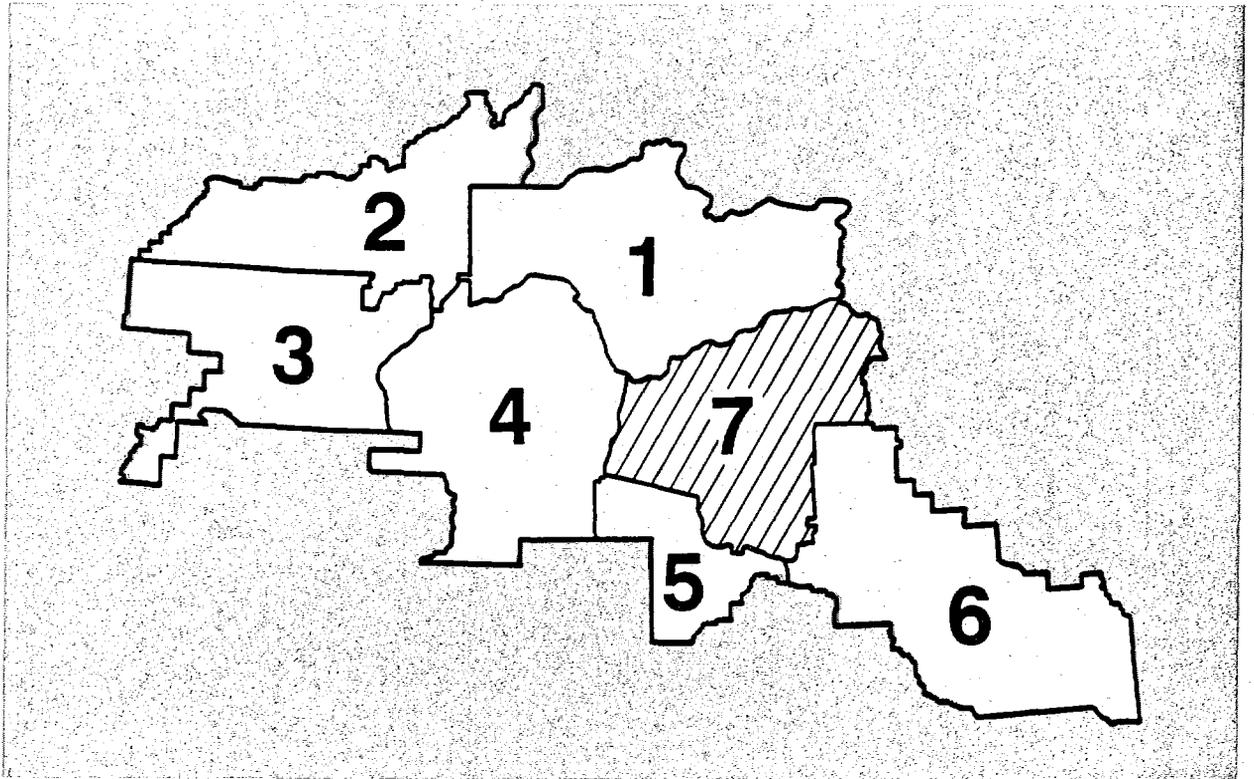

Subregion 7

Delta-Salcha



Subregion 7

DELTA-SALCHA

The Delta-Salcha subregion includes over 2,000,000 acres centered at Delta Junction and bordered on the north by Eielson Air Force Base, on the west by federal reserve lands, on the south by the crest of the Alaska Range, and on the east by the limit of State land.

Portions of the Richardson and Alaska highways run through this subregion, providing access to much of the area. Additional access is provided by many roads and trails. Several navigable rivers provide access to more remote areas. Main land uses include agriculture, forestry, mining, hunting and fishing, recreation, and settlement.

Planning for this subregion began in 1975 when the Alaska Division of Lands launched an intensive land management planning effort for this area. The idea was to develop land use recommendations based on an organized public forum and technical information supplied by a team of government agency and professional people. The impetus came from impending agricultural development near Delta Junction.

The "Delta Land Management Planning Study" resulted in four reports. Collectively, these volumes contain the opinions, information, and recommendations that participants supplied during nearly three years of deliberation. It also resulted in classification of all state lands within the study boundaries, plus proposed classification for a substantial portion of Fort Greely, native selected lands, and other areas that would be affected if the state were to receive title to these lands.

In late 1978, the first four volumes of the Delta report were summarized in a fifth volume, which also outlined what actions the state had taken in response to the Delta study recommendations.

An update of the plan was begun in 1980 and completed in 1982. As part of the update, the planning documents were re-formatted to comply with new DNR planning standards. The new plan was entitled the *Delta-Salcha Area Plan*.

The *Delta-Salcha Area Plan* has now been updated again and has been incorporated into the Tanana Basin Area Plan as Subregion 7. Fifteen management units are included within the subregion.

AGRICULTURE

Significant agricultural development has taken place within this subregion. Two of Alaska's three agricultural projects are located in this subregion. Both are located near Delta Junction. The Delta I Agricultural Project totals 60,000 acres and the Delta II Agricultural Project totals 25,000. Since 1978, an additional 27,000 acres have been sold for agricultural purposes in small farm sales in various areas of this subregion. Additional land with agricultural potential located within the Delta Creek management unit has not been offered.

Lands classified for agriculture will continue to be managed primarily for their agricultural potential. Lands previously sold for agricultural uses, returned to the state through relinquishment or foreclosure, will be reoffered as practical to prevent regrowth of previously cleared land and meet land purchase demands.

Within the Delta-Salcha Subregion, 680 acres of state land may be available for agriculture. In Subunit 7I1 with co-primary designations of agriculture and settlement, land may be sold fee simple (for settlement) if soils are not suitable for agriculture.

**STATE LAND RECOMMENDED
FOR AGRICULTURE**

| Future Projects | Subunit | Acres |
|--|----------------|--------------|
| Delta Parcels | 7I1 | 600 |
| Delta Parcels Agriculture | 7H3 | 80 |
| TOTAL | | 680 |
| Existing Projects | Subunit | Acres |
| Clearwater Agriculture | 7I1 | 620 |
| Clearwater (Johnson Slough) | 7N7 | 1000 |
| Delta Junction Reoffers Agriculture | 7I1 | 550 |
| Richardson Agriculture Homestead | 7H3 | 1520 |
| TOTAL | | 3,690 |

FISH & WILDLIFE

Dall sheep, moose, bison, caribou, grizzly and black bear, and wolves are the large mammals found in the Delta-Salcha subregion. Wolverine, marten, mink, muskrat, beaver, fox, coyote, lynx, and river otter are found in varying abundance throughout the subregion. Other small mammals complete the mammalian fauna.

Large numbers of ducks, geese, and swans migrate through the area each spring and fall. A few nest in small numbers where small lakes are available. Grouse and ptarmigan are resident throughout most of the planning area. Very large numbers of sandhill cranes migrate through the area. There are a large number of raptor nesting sites along the Tanana River.

The Delta-Salcha area, within the Tanana River drainage, contains 11 named rivers, 19 named lakes, and 67 named creeks. Over 13 lakes are stocked on a regular basis with rainbow trout and coho salmon. Sport and subsistence fishing for king, chum, and coho salmon, burbot, grayling, lake trout, rainbow trout, northern pike, and whitefish occurs throughout the area.

FORESTRY

The timber resource in the subregion consists predominately of mixed stands of birch in association with aspen, cottonwood, and white spruce. Occasionally, stands containing primarily aspen, cottonwood, or spruce are found adjacent to stream and river banks. Nearly all forested land lies north and

east of the Richardson and Alaska highways. Prominent exceptions include a band of timber paralleling the west bank of the Delta River and centering along the south bank of the Tanana River, and a series of white spruce stands east of the Goodpaster River, along the banks of the Tanana River and Gerstle River.

MINERALS

Mining has long been an activity within the subregion. The Alaska Range has been a focus for hard mineral exploration, especially gold. Prior to 1976, the terrain south of the Denali fault in the central Alaska Range had yielded promising deposits. Since 1976 exploration efforts have discovered two important new mineral belts on the northern flank of the Alaska Range.

Potential lode deposits of gold, lead, and copper exist in the Richardson District. Several areas of placer gold production are located within the subregion. Of principal importance are the Richardson District, the Ober Creek-Jarvis Creek District, and tributaries of the Johnson River.

The subregion has received little attention as a possible petroleum province. A small coal field is present in the vicinity of Jarvis Creek.

RECREATION

There are many important recreational resources within this subregion. Recreational settings vary from high peaks and glaciers in the Alaska range to river bottom lands and major watercourses. Public road access is available to three sizable lakes: Harding, Birch, and Quartz, making them especially important for public recreation. With the exception of the Delta-Clearwater, navigable clearwater streams are limited to those flowing into the north side of the Tanana River. The upper Delta River is the only readily floatable "whitewater" stream found in the subregion.

The primitive and scenic qualities of much of the subregion, plus other attributes such as wildlife and relative accessibility, make it especially valuable for a multitude of outdoor recreation pursuits such as hunting, fishing, hiking, boating, cross-country skiing, climbing, and photography. Established public recreation facilities within the subregion include four campgrounds and two wayside and rest areas with picnic facilities.

SETTLEMENT

Prior to 1982, 3,164 acres had been sold in this subregion for residential use. Between 1982 and 1989, and additional 3,500 acres were sold for settlement. Within the Delta-Salcha Subregion, 100 acres of state land may be available for settlement as a subdivision. Several units, including Johnson Road, Delta Creek, Tanana Uplands, and Delta Junction, have potential for future disposals.

STATE LAND RECOMMENDED FOR RECREATIONAL SUBDIVISIONS AND FEE SIMPLE HOMESTEADS

| Future Projects | Subunit | Acres |
|--------------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Richardson Commercial Subdivision | 7L2 | 100 |
| TOTAL | | 100 |
| Existing Projects | Subunit | Acres |
| Southbank Homestead | 7G4 | 1,000 |
| Volkmar Lake Homestead | 7E2 | 2,020 |
| Big Delta Odd Lots | 7I1 | 150 |
| Bluff Cabin Ridge Subdivision | 7HI | 300 |
| Craig Lake Subdivision | 7N | 200 |
| Delta Junction Reoffers | 7I1 | 585 |
| Delta OTE Reoffer | 7I1 | 303 |
| Donnelly Subdivision | 7M3 | 72 |
| Jack II Subdivision | 7I1 | 80 |
| TOTAL | | 4,710 |

TRANSPORTATION

The existing transportation network within the subregion includes the Richardson and Alaska highways, the oil pipeline, many roads and trails, and rivers. A variety of resources in the Delta-Salcha area will require access construction prior to development or extraction of the resource. Forest areas, recreation lands, and mineralized terrane areas are all examples of such resources.